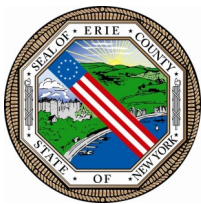


Erie County Clerk's Office

Erie County Auto Bureau

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Winterize Your Car

Tips from the Erie County Clerk's Office to Prepare Yourself for Winter on the Road.



If You Become Stranded...

- **Stay in your vehicle.** Walking in a storm can be very dangerous. You can lose your way, wander out of reach, become exhausted, collapse and risk your life - your car can be a good shelter.
- **Avoid overexertion.** Attempting to push your car, trying to jack it into a new position or shoveling snow takes great effort in storm conditions and can cause injury.
- **Calm down and think.** Stay calm and don't work enough to get hot and sweaty. Wet clothing loses insulation quality making you more susceptible to the effects of hypothermia.
- **Keep fresh air in your vehicle.** It is much better to be chilly or cold and awake than to become comfortably warm and slip into unconsciousness. Freezing-wet or wind-driven snow can plug your vehicle's exhaust system causing deadly carbon monoxide gas to enter your vehicle.
- **Don't run the engine.** Unless you are certain the exhaust pipe is free of snow or other objects, keep your car off. Keep the radiator free from snow to prevent the engine from overheating. Run the engine at 10 minute intervals each hour for heat.
- **Turn on the dome light at night, but only when running the engine**— so not to drain your battery.
- **Keep your blood circulating freely.** Loosen any tight clothing, change positions frequently and move your arms and legs. Huddle close to one another. Rub your hands together or put them under your armpits or between your legs. Remove your shoes occasionally and rub your feet.
- **Don't expect to be comfortable.** The challenge is to survive until you're found.
- **Make yourself visible to rescuers.** Tie a bright cloth to your antenna or door handle.

Winter Driving Tips

- **Get the latest weather forecast before you leave**— check with the National Weather Service at www.erh.noaa.gov/buf/
- **Keep a full tank of gas** at all times.
- Be sure you **have fresh antifreeze** in your car.
- **Clear snow and ice from all windows and lights** - even the hood and roof- before driving.
- **Brake early. Brake correctly.** It takes more time and distance to stop in wintry conditions.
- Be aware that **exit ramps usually have less anti-icing material** than the main roads and take care when exiting the Thruway.
- **Don't use "cruise control"**. The slightest touch of your brakes to deactivate the cruise control can cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
- **Don't get overconfident in a four wheel drive vehicle.** It may help you get going quicker, but it won't help you stop quicker.
- **Look further ahead in traffic** than you normally do. Even a split second of extra reaction time can make a difference.
- **Leave room for maintenance vehicles and plows.** Stay back at least 200 feet and don't pass on the right.

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How to Prepare Your Car

Get a Checkup:

- ✿ Have the ignition, brakes, wiring, hoses and fan belts checked.
- ✿ Change and adjust spark plugs.
- ✿ Check the air, fuel and emission filters and the PCV valve.
- ✿ Check the battery.
- ✿ Check the tires for air, sidewall wear and tread depth.
- ✿ Check the antifreeze level and freeze line.

Your car should also have a tune up to ensure your best gas mileage, a quick start and fast response. The better shape your car is in, the safer you are.

Keep in Your Trunk:

- ✿ Spare tire, properly inflated, a wheel wrench and jack
- ✿ Shovel
- ✿ Jumper cables
- ✿ Tow and tire chains
- ✿ Salt or cat litter
- ✿ Tool kit
- ✿ Working flashlight and batteries
- ✿ Brightly-colored cloth
- ✿ First aid kit
- ✿ Ice scraper and snow brush
- ✿ Mittens, socks, a hat and blankets
- ✿ Wooden stick matches in waterproof container
- ✿ Non-perishable, high energy foods like unsalted canned nuts, dried fruits and hard candy
- ✿ A case of water, which also adds weight to the car
- ✿ 12 volt charger for cell phone or electronic devices

For more information
visit our website at
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